



# **Corporate Strategy 2005–2010**

Proposal Submitted to the Board of Governors

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# 1 Introduction

- 2 IDRC's Corporate Strategy and Program Framework 2005-2010 is the Centre's strategic plan. The Corporate Strategy (CS) component is divided into two parts. The first is a situation analysis that examines the environmental drivers underlying the Centre's work. The second part lays out the foundations for the Centre's work: its legislative mandate and purpose, its values and fundamental beliefs, its guiding principles, and its strategic objectives.
- 3 The Program Framework (PF) describes the overall program architecture for the next five years. This includes the main areas of research (Program Areas), the explorations under way and being planned, and the ways in which programming is expected to evolve in the coming years. The PF also addresses the major question of how the Centre will carry out its program of work. The details of the three Program Areas are presented in a set of prospectuses, one for each of the main research thrusts (Program Initiatives). These prospectuses include a detailed explanation of the Program Initiatives: their defining features (methodological, institutional, and topical), objectives, and key issues. As not all Program Initiatives come up for renewal at the same time, only three will accompany this Corporate Strategy and Program Framework (CS+PF) to the November 2004 meeting of the Board of Governors.
- 4 The Operational Plan (OP), a companion document to the Corporate Strategy and Program Framework, will be shared with the Board of Governors in March 2005. The Operational Plan will serve management's need to debate, choose, and articulate an organizational structure, an internal governance and accountability model, and key business processes best suited to supporting the achievement of the goals and objectives of the CS+PF. The OP will help align the Centre's resources with its needs.
- 5 The Corporate Strategy and Program Framework (CS+PF) is based on a careful assessment of the international and domestic context for the Centre's work. This assessment began with the commissioning of 10 background papers by outside experts in both Canada and developing countries. These papers cover:
  - knowledge networks,
  - the changing world of development cooperation,
  - the Canadian research environment,
  - the Canadian foreign policy context,
  - the research-development nexus, as well as
  - regional issues in science, technology, research, and development.
- 6 The assessment also included:
  - extensive formal consultations with experts, mostly from developing countries, during four regional meetings held in Cairo, Dakar, Hanoi, and Montevideo,
  - consultations with IDRC's partners in the Canadian foreign policy community and the Canadian research community;
  - ongoing discussions with project partners in the field and with other research donors, including through the International Forum of Research Donors,

- a series of face-to-face and electronic consultations with Centre staff, and
  - meetings of the Board of Governors on both CS and PF issues.
- 7 Nine external reviews of Program Initiatives were conducted, and fed into the planning process, as were participatory mid-term evaluations for two other Program Initiatives. A number of strategic evaluations, most notably a comprehensive review of the influence of IDRC-supported research on public policy, rounded out the reflection.

## 8 **Part 1**

### 9 **Continuity and Change in the Context for Development Research<sup>1</sup>**

- 10 This part reviews the main external factors — or environmental drivers — considered by IDRC's Board, staff, and partners during this strategic planning process. For convenience, these can be divided into drivers related to the international development context and those related to the Canadian context. Inevitably, the two contexts are inter-related, and they are described separately purely for reasons of clarity.

#### 11 **The international development context**

- 12 Despite apparently accelerating globalization, the world remains a highly unequal and fragmented place. The per capita income of the high-income countries is still over 90 times higher than the per capita income of the least developed countries. Children in least developed countries are 17 times more likely to die before their fifth birthday and 35% less likely to finish primary school than their counterparts in the industrialized world. Globalization has undoubtedly brought benefits to many, including economic growth and widespread access to capital, information, technology, and goods and services on an unprecedented scale. But globalization is also partial; its benefits have been highly unequally shared, with the richer countries and regions and a select few developing countries getting the lion's share of the benefits. There is much evidence to suggest, however, that the interaction between the forces of globalization and domestic policy is important: those countries that have prospered are those that have managed globalization best. Globalization has also brought its problems, including financial instability, accelerated spread of epidemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS and SARS, global warming, and internationalized

<sup>1</sup> Data sources for this section: Chen, Shaohua and Martin Ravallion 2004 "How have the world's poorest fared since the early 1980s?" World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3341, June; *The Economist* (London) 13 March 2004; *Financial Times* (London) 5 May 2004; InterAcademy Council 2004 *Inventing a Better Future: A Strategy for Building Worldwide Capacities in Science and Technology*, IAC, Amsterdam; Martin, Paul 2004 "Address by Prime Minister Paul Martin on the occasion of a luncheon hosted by the Laval Chamber of Commerce", PMO, Ottawa. PNUD 2004 *La Democracia en América Latina: Hacia una Democracia de Ciudadanas y Ciudadanos*, UNDP, New York; UNDP 2003 *Human Development Report 2003*, UNDP, New York; UNDP 2004 *Arab Human Development Report*, UNDP, New York; UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2003 *Measuring and Monitoring the Information and Knowledge Societies: A Statistical Challenge*, UIS, Montréal; G. Westhom, B. Tchatchoua and P. Tindemans 2004 "Measuring progress towards knowledge societies" *A World of Science* (UNESCO), Vol. 2, No. 1; World Bank, 2004 *World Development Report 2004*, World Bank, Washington DC.

criminality of various sorts, including terrorism, international trafficking in humans, trade in narcotics and illegal weaponry, and associated money laundering.

- 13 While economic growth has resumed in most of the industrialized world in the last three years, the record in the developing countries is less uniform. Most of Asia has been growing rapidly, while Latin America has stagnated, and parts of Africa and other regions are actually shrinking. Globally, the proportion of people living under the poverty line of US\$1 a day is falling, but opinions differ as to whether the actual number of people under the poverty line is falling as well. Even where GDP is growing quickly, the level of income poverty is falling at a much slower rate; in South Asia, for example, it takes 5-7% growth in national income to reduce the proportion of people living under the poverty line by one percentage point. Income inequality remains stubbornly high, both between countries and within many countries, and evidence has begun to show that inequality is an important driver of conflict within countries. Non-monetary measures of poverty and welfare give a more complex picture still.
- 14 Paralleling the global inequalities in wealth and welfare are equally large, or even larger, inequalities in knowledge, technology, research and the general ability to apply these to the problems of development. The countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are home to 21% of the world's population, but account for 58% of world income, 72% of internet users, and 80% of world gross expenditures on research and development. In 2001, in most African countries less than 0.5% of the population used the internet; in Latin America, the figure in most countries was between 3% and 10%; in the industrialized countries, between one-quarter and one-half of the population were internet users. Adoption of new information and communication technologies is rising rapidly in the developing world, however.
- 15 The high-income industrialized countries spend between 1.5% and 3.8% of their national income on research and development (R&D). African countries spend on average only 0.3% of their much smaller income on R&D and the Arab states, only 0.2%. Developing countries on average spend 0.5% of their national income on R&D. The patterns of expenditure on R&D are replicated in other indicators of R&D capacity, such as the number of researchers, research centres, libraries and laboratories, and the number and rate of research outputs, such as articles published in refereed journals and patents issued. Africa, for example, has 13% of the world's population, but only 1.2% of its researchers. Gross annual expenditure per researcher (in purchasing power parity terms) ranges from US\$191,000 in the OECD to \$69,000 in Africa and \$48,000 in the Arab states.
- 16 Within the developing world, R&D expenditure and research capacity are highly concentrated in a small number of countries. Indeed, intra-regional differences in R&D are as significant as inter-regional differences. Three-quarters of all African R&D expenditure takes place in South Africa, for example. In fact, the concentration of developing countries' R&D in a small number of countries (Brazil, China, India, South Africa) is so striking that many people are beginning to consider these countries to be a separate group altogether. The gross annual expenditure per researcher in the newly industrialized countries in Asia, for example, is \$184,000 in purchasing power parity terms and in Brazil it is \$190,000, only 4% and 0.5% lower than in the OECD average respectively.

- 17 Paradoxically, the growing heterogeneity between the countries of “the South” may create opportunities for fruitful South-South cooperation, as less developed countries learn from the success of others. However, it may also drive the more high-capacity developing countries to look the other way, and seek contacts only in the industrialized world.
- 18 The current fast pace of economic and social change throughout the world is associated with an even more fundamental and rapid change in technologies, especially information and communication technology, biotechnology and nanotechnology. These new technologies and their benefits are unevenly spread throughout the world; the famous “digital divide” is mirrored in other scientific and technological divides. Though the new technologies bring with them many opportunities and benefits, they can have a downside as well. The overall gap in research capacity between rich and poor nations is probably smaller than the gap in capacity related to these new technologies, especially biotechnology and nanotechnology. All countries are faced with hard policy choices with respect to genetically modified organisms, intellectual property rights and indigenous knowledge, trade in new technologies and their products, food safety, environmental protection, and other areas. But developing countries often have very little capacity to analyze these problems and deal with them on the basis of evidence. Building this capacity demands large investments from states that are already under pressure to spend money on other worthy projects, such as the promotion of the rights to primary education and health care. At the same time, donor and developing country governments alike are increasingly aware of the possibilities that the new technologies offer for poverty reduction, employment, and sustainable and equitable development.
- 19 Patterns of economic growth, especially the prevalence of certain styles of production and consumption, combined with demographic change and inadequate environmental policy and management practices, aggravate the environmental challenges faced by people in developing countries. Complex, inter-related and not amenable to top-down environmental management, these challenges manifest themselves at local, national, regional and global levels. The impacts of human activity on fresh water, soils, forests, fisheries and oceans as well as on other crucial resources and ecological process are evident at a global scale. The poor are most immediately vulnerable to the consequences: polluted and scarce water, lower crop yields, degraded ecosystems yielding less of the food and materials they depend on. While some of the interactions between the health of the ecosystem and human health are well understood, many others are not, and effective practices, technologies, policies and laws to ensure the health of both humans and the ecosystem are only just beginning to emerge. Many of the appropriate responses to environmental problems must begin at the community level and be scaled up; these responses need to be supported at sub-national, national, regional or even global levels by laws, policies and programs that enhance the quality and resilience of social and ecological systems.
- 20 At the level of global policy and governance, a broad consensus exists around the importance of achieving the goals of the main international conferences of this decade, namely the 2000 Millennium Summit (including the Millennium Development Goals), the 2002 Monterrey Summit on Financing for Development, and the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. There is broad — though not universal — agreement around the need for poverty reduction, sustainable development, the promotion of human rights, and a new partnership between rich and poor countries for development

and global governance. There is consensus on the need for economic growth, especially growth that benefits the poor but that does not harm the environment.

- 21 There is much less consensus, however, on how to achieve these lofty goals. On other issues, such as international trade negotiations, the provision and financing of global public goods, intellectual property rights, global climate change, control of HIV/AIDS, and the reform of global governance structures, there is no consensus in sight. While much of the lack of consensus is based on differences in philosophical values, ideology or interest, no small part of it is based on disagreements about the relevant facts, which in many cases are not known. The lack of consensus on how to achieve global development goals therefore creates space for research to provide an evidential base for dialogue, negotiations and decision-making. Even where differences are based on values or ideology, the discovery and public display of the factual evidence — and of the uncertainties surrounding existing knowledge — can help move the debate forward.
- 22 At the global level, important changes are occurring in the international system and how it works. The growth of international law as a source of legitimacy, even in hitherto purely domestic affairs, is a remarkable feature of the last two decades. Regional organizations have grown in number, scope and stature. In most countries and regions there has been a tremendous growth in the number of civil society organizations of all types over the last 15 years. These civil society organizations range from the community-based organizations to the big international non-governmental organizations, to religious organizations and movements, women's and youth groups, and advocacy and lobbying groups of all types. Many of these are networked with each other and with the state and the private sector. Coupled with this rapid growth in civil society organizations has been a worldwide drive to more decentralized modes of governance, more community participation, and more policy processes involving multiple stakeholders. These factors are so pervasive that many now argue that the state has lost its monopoly on public policy making, even its monopoly on its traditional core responsibilities. Many of these dynamics and their implications for development policy and practice are poorly understood.
- 23 On the positive side, the rise — in both absolute and relative terms — of the private sector and civil society vis à vis the state has created tremendous opportunities. Wealth creation is no longer stigmatized as it once was. The genuinely creative energies of the private for-profit sector and of civil society organizations are less shackled by state (and other) controls than they were before. There is a growing realization that the state, the private sector and the voluntary sector do have common ground, and can work fruitfully together in a number of areas, in ways previously thought to be unlikely or impossible. The private for-profit sector can act both as an engine of development and as a strategic partner to development cooperation agencies. Research is needed to better understand this emerging world, and to identify the public policy framework needed for private sector development and public-private partnerships.
- 24 But there is also a sense of considerable disquiet about the state of governance in the world. Formal electoral democracy is an enormous achievement, and its rapid spread throughout the world in the last two decades is to be applauded. There is, however, also a widespread feeling that democracies have under-performed. In Canada, for example, there is talk of a "democratic deficit". In Latin America, a recent report by the United Nations Development Programme has spoken eloquently of the need to move from

“a democracy of voters to a democracy of citizens.” Youth in many parts of the world are alienated from the formal political process. In many countries, newly democratized regimes have secured important improvements in civil and political rights, but have failed — relatively or absolutely — to guarantee economic, social and cultural rights. The groups most likely to be excluded from participation in governance processes include the poor, women, children, ethnic and religious minorities, and those living in remote rural areas.

- 25 While states have liberalized and privatized in a number of fields where such measures were undoubtedly necessary, this withdrawal of the state has been poorly planned and executed in too many circumstances, often with dire consequences for poor people. People are starting to talk of the “disorderly retreat of the state”, and of the need for the state to assert a more positive role in ensuring the provision of basic services to ordinary citizens: education, health (including the control of epidemic diseases), water and sanitation, environmental protection, law and order, social protection, roads, and mail. As the recent UNDP report on Latin America asserts, the failure of the democratic state to ensure provision of such basic services to its citizens may undermine the legitimacy of the whole democratic project. Needless to say, when the state fails to ensure provision of basic services, the usual groups suffer most: the poor, women, children, ethnic and religious minorities, and those living in remote areas. Several cures for this ill have been proposed, including more public investment, a larger role for the private sector, public-private partnerships, decentralization, and community participation. The claims advanced on behalf of each of these cures outstrip the research to back them up.
- 26 Related to these failings of governance are a number of issues related to rural development. Urban areas continue to grow rapidly, and urban populations now outnumber rural populations in some countries and regions. Yet the health and development of cities continue to depend in large part on the vitality of rural communities and rural environments, which provide cities with food, fuel, water, and clean air, amongst other things. In many parts of the world, poverty remains predominantly rural; indeed, three-quarters of the people struggling to survive on less than US\$1 per day live in rural areas. Rural areas, especially remote ones, pose particular challenges for service delivery; the level of provision of basic services is usually much lower in rural areas than in urban or peri-urban areas. Needless to say, the well documented bias against rural areas in the allocation of R&D resources continues to be a major issue in most countries and regions.
- 27 Also on the downside, there is the corrosive influence of corruption and illegal activities worldwide. Corruption, criminality and illegal networks and activities of all kinds steal developmental resources and undermine peace, order and good government. Under non-democratic regimes, the challenges of good governance and human rights are even greater still. In an unfortunately large number of countries, the failure of governance is such that violent conflict and insecurity reign, and undermine development. In some countries, armed conflict is *the* development issue. It hardly needs to be added that the potential for productive new relationships between the state, the private sector and the voluntary sector are unlikely to be realized in situations of failed or failing governance.
- 28 Also on the negative side of the ledger is the continued existence of a litany of forms of discrimination, exclusion and inequity that deprive people of their human rights and impede development. Discrimination and exclusion based on gender, ethnicity,



socio-economic class, age, religion and caste still blight the world. These forms of discrimination and exclusion, and the power structures that support them, often overlap and inter-link with each other. Analyzing these overlaps and linkages and the ways to untangle them remains a core task for those interested in human rights and development. Development has a political dimension, and is not simply a technical matter.

- 29 The political and social environment sometimes places significant, unnecessary and harmful constraints on researchers. UNDP's *Arab Human Development Report*, for example, has documented the harmful effects of constrained knowledge systems and of impediments to female literacy and female participation in knowledge-intensive activities. But the problem is far from being unique to the Arab world. In many parts of the world, the space for critical inquiry, especially but not solely critical social science research, is far too small. Often the cause is a repressive regime seeking to stifle or channel debate. But even where there is no outright repression by the state, the critical edge of research is often dulled by academic custom, traditional, disciplinary and other boundaries, and self-censorship in the face of powerful and hostile interests. A particularly unfortunate tendency throughout the world is for male-dominated research establishments to discount gender-focused research. Fostering a more critical research environment without putting researchers at risk is a key challenge.
- 30 Failures in the political, economic and social environments often both create and reflect weaknesses in the capacity of institutions to address developmental challenges. Academic institutions, civil society organizations, government and the private sector often lack the capacity to acquire, process and apply knowledge sufficiently well to arrive at sustainable and equitable solutions to the problems they face. This is particularly true in the poorest countries, and in countries affected by protracted armed conflict. Institutional strengthening is needed, and needs to be accomplished locally. Also needed is a way to bridge very local, often community-based, interventions and institutions on the one hand, and national or global policy and practice on the other.
- 31 Notwithstanding the environment outlined above and the increased interest by most OECD bilateral donors and multilateral agencies in knowledge, science and technology, the gap between supply and demand in developing countries remains enormous. The findings of the Commission on Health Research and Development illustrate this well: only 10% of the world's health research budget of \$50-60 billion is spent on diseases affecting 90% of the world's population, located principally in the South.
- 32 Bilateral donors from OECD countries, national governments of emerging economies, multilateral agencies, private foundations and the private sector remain the prime funders of science and technology in developing countries. Although bilateral sources are often the most significant in dollar values, many programs remain tied to Northern domestic research interests. Largely US-based private foundations continue to be leading investors in innovation and knowledge for development, although their thematic and regional reach is often limited. The longest standing collaboration between research donors is support to research on agriculture and food security, including through the Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research, now called Future Harvest. More recently, partnerships have been established for health research and research on information and communication technologies (ICTs), including increasingly with the private sector. Foundations have placed a high priority on building capacity in the higher

education sector in Africa. Networks on social sciences research continue to develop, although few include community or user participation. Despite the flourishing of developing country interest and the proliferation of private sector and non-governmental activity in the field of ICTs, the research sector remains under-funded by both foundations and bilateral donors, though with some exceptions.

- 32 In some developing nations such as India, China, Brazil and South Africa, the line between development partners is blurring. The same is true in a handful of smaller emerging economies such as Chile and Thailand, which are realizing the importance of building domestic research capacities and training their young researchers. Some developing countries will likely soon change from aid recipients to donors, creating opportunities for triangular and other innovative partnerships between South and North and within the South.

## 34 **The Canadian environment**

- 35 Despite the recent change in government, Canadian policy remains substantially unchanged in a large number of areas. The primary pre-occupation of Canadian foreign policy remains the relationship with our southern neighbour. Canada remains a committed globalist and multilateralist, a founding member of the UN, the Commonwealth, la Francophonie, the OECD, the Bretton Woods institutions and NATO, amongst other organizations. Canada remains committed to the promotion of peace, order and good government both at home and abroad. That means a strong preference for the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the application of force only under limited and duly authorized circumstances, the promotion of the rule of (international) law, the promotion of human rights, a commitment to freer international trade and investment, a commitment to building a more just world including through development assistance, and an openness to immigration from other countries.
- 36 Nevertheless, several profound changes have recently occurred or are occurring in the Canadian context in recent years. Among these, the most relevant to IDRC is the public sector's renewed interest in research, science, and technology. Since 1997, federal public funding on R&D has increased by \$13 billion. No less important have been significant changes in Canada's public research architecture, notably the creation of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the creation of the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, and the establishment of the Network of Centres of Excellence. The public grant-making councils are beginning to transform themselves into knowledge management institutions, and there is growing interest in internationalizing Canadian research capacity beyond OECD countries. Commercialization of science and technology research is increasingly a priority, as part of the new government's commitment to building a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. This increasing interest in the cultivation of knowledge-intensive industries is in line with trends in other donor and OECD countries. Still, Canadian researchers wishing to do development research and/or interdisciplinary research have not dedicated funding agency to turn to.
- 37 Many public policy challenges previously thought of as "domestic", such as criminality and security, governance of telecommunications, financial regulation, pollution, epidemic diseases, are now recognized as being regional and even global. Such problems in Canada affect other countries, and vice versa. Hence, addressing such challenges in collaboration with other countries could prove mutually beneficial. Paralleling a trend seen in other

OECD countries, most of the Canadian government's "domestic" departments and even provincial governments are now engaged in a range of international collaborations, often around themes that could loosely be referred to as global public goods: climate change, sustainable management of natural resources such as oceans and forests, financial stability, international standards for technology, international law, and security. Many of these activities have a research component. There is a strong feeling that the Canadian experience in many fields, such as federalism, environmental protection, human rights, social security, could be of value to developing countries. Equally, there is a growing realization that Canada has much to learn from the rest of the world.

- 38 The Canadian public sector has also taken a lead role in public sector reform. Public service, client-oriented services, providing value for money, and being able to show results for Canadians are parts of a new ethos of government. In its development assistance programs, the Government of Canada has embraced OECD guidelines and standards with respect to aid effectiveness. This has implied the application of results-based management to development assistance. Good governance, probity and proper stewardship of resources are values that Canada promotes abroad, but also must foster at home.
- 39 The expectation that different departments must now work together in a whole-of-government approach is also part of the evolving public sector ethos. IDRC has been at the forefront of this movement, working with several government departments on initiatives such as the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas and the International Model Forest Network Secretariat. An important manifestation of this new whole-of-government approach is the International Policy Review, which was ongoing at the time of writing. Part of this review is the recognition that international policy, including development cooperation, requires fresh thinking on various fronts. The role of the private for-profit sector in development cooperation is one such example, as is the role that the Canadian government can play in promoting the emergence of a strong domestic private sector in developing countries.
- 40 Most encouraging is the continued commitment of recent Canadian governments to double Canada's international assistance budget by 2010, through 8% annual increases. This commitment has already benefited IDRC, as well as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). These steady increases have not only permitted the strengthening of existing development cooperation programs and the launch of some new ones, but have also provided a much more predictable budgetary and planning framework, which should improve the effectiveness of programming. This budgetary increase is in line with the practice of most other donors, who have also begun to increase their official development assistance budgets after almost a decade of decline in the 1990s. Linking the innovation and development assistance agendas, the Prime Minister has established a long-term commitment to devoting 5% of Canada's research and development resources to the needs of developing countries.

#### 41 **Implications for IDRC**

- 42 The challenges outlined above are not simple. Discovering and implementing sustainable and equitable solutions will require knowledge-intensive processes. Research, knowledge production, knowledge sharing and knowledge use are essential if the global community is to build a better future for humankind. The InterAcademy Council, a grouping of

national science councils from both rich and poor countries, has argued forcefully in its recent report *Inventing a Better Future* that every country should have a minimum scientific research capacity to face today's development challenges. This capacity is needed to enable countries to innovate and grow, but also to be able to absorb and benefit from existing technologies. The InterAcademy Council argues in favour of both individual and institutional support to capacity building for science and technology, and for the benefits of networking scientists within and across countries, regions and the world. IDRC will continue to advocate for the building of scientific research capacity as an important building block for growth in developing countries.

- 43 The continuing gulf between rich and poor countries in terms of research resources, the continued importance of knowledge and ideas for the solution of stubborn development challenges, the necessity for having a domestic science and technology capacity in all societies, and the imperative for innovations in the ways that science is conducted and managed — all these suggest a key role for an international institution with the agility, the intellectual assets and experience of an IDRC.
- 44 The peoples of developing countries must be able to control their own knowledge-based development. Therefore, strengthening capacity for research, independent policy analysis, and accessing knowledge are critical. Analytical capacity in developing countries must allow them to contribute as informed participants to major international debates such as those on international trade, climate change, reform of the global financial architecture, and changes to the global intellectual property rights regime. They must be able to deal directly with issues of direct domestic concern such as governance, economic policy, natural resource management, and social equity where, in the absence of indigenous capacity, the analysis by external actors may be all that is available and will carry undue weight. These considerations should influence IDRC's program choices.
- 45 The developmental challenges facing poor countries are complex and inter-linked. For example, soil erosion is not just an issue for soil scientists and hydrologists, though they have an important role. It is also an economic question, a social question, a gender relations question, and a governance question. The complexities of the challenges demand that research must also be complex. Purely disciplinary solutions will only rarely suffice. Much more often, an interdisciplinary approach will be needed, which implies the participation of teams of researchers, each well grounded in their own discipline, but also open to collaboration with researchers from other traditions.
- 46 Since development challenges are different, or are at least experienced differently, in various regions, IDRC must ensure a balance between regional tailoring and ensuring a global coherence and synergy of its programs. IDRC will continue to use a matrix management approach to ensure that, within the three corporate Program Areas, programming initiatives respond appropriately to regional needs and circumstances. Africa will remain the priority region, in keeping with its particular challenges and Canada's commitment to the continent.
- 47 To reflect the diversity in the domain of research across different countries and institutions, the forms of support that are provided (the "modalities") are often important. IDRC must continue to be flexible in matching the types of support to each situation.

- 48 In countries where capacity to make and implement policy is weak, connections should be made as early as possible between researchers and the intended users or recipients of the research. As shown by IDRC's recent study on the policy influence of research that it has supported, this involvement of users increases the potential for the research to inform and influence policymakers. Other lessons from the study include the need for timeliness of research to fit into open policy windows, the need for researchers to package research findings differently for different target audiences, and the need to better understand the policy making environment and the ways research might feed into policy in a given context.
- 49 Donors are increasingly interested in supporting the production of and access to knowledge. IDRC will continue to look for increased opportunities to work in partnership with like-minded and innovative donors, including the private sector, and to expand the availability of resources to developing country research. IDRC will continue to participate in discussions in the donor community, including through the International Forum of Research Donors and in developing countries, about how to do so. Within the limits of its resources, IDRC will also do what it can to ensure that research communities benefit from the potential advantages of ICTs, and encourage others to provide support to this vital area.
- 50 An analysis of what other donors are supporting has shown that much remains unchanged in recent years. IDRC remains one of the few agencies in the world, in the words of a recent World Bank survey, to take its lead from foreign researchers. The Centre is perhaps unique in putting development research grant making at the core of its mandate. Other distinctive features include program delivery directly through Southern partners and across a broad geographic spread of developing countries, an arms-length relationship with Government and a strong commitment to working across the disciplines in applied and experimental ways.
- 51 IDRC has considerable freedom to try new approaches and to innovate in the field of development research. The Centre must continue to use the powers inherent in its Act to experiment, and to show intellectual leadership. IDRC can also take the lead in following new lines of inquiry such as biotechnology, private sector development, ICT policy and governance, research and innovation systems, and telecentre support networks. In these areas, as in others, IDRC will seek partnerships with other donors while retaining its independence in programming.
- 52 The major foundations and multilateral and bilateral agencies remain strong partners of the Centre, particularly in the more mature programs. Ongoing work on food security and agriculture, health equity, higher education capacity building, access to information and globalization continue to provide abundant opportunities to work in complementary and often collective ways. Increasingly, the private sector needs to be engaged, as do the emerging and potential donor nations of the South. This requires a new approach to both the ways in which development research is conceived, and how it is supported.
- 53 It is clear from the preceding description that IDRC continues to work in an environment requiring a high tolerance of risk. The Centre must have an acute sense of what risks and opportunities it faces in trying to achieve the objectives of the CS+PF 2005-2010. The Centre must think clearly about what measures would help to mitigate any unwanted

risks, be they internal to the Centre, within the Canadian environment, or abroad. IDRC will put a greater emphasis in the CS+PF 2005-2010 on understanding the Centre's corporate risk profile. At the corporate level, an integrated risk management strategy will build on core assets such as IDRC's field presence, highly skilled staff and niche role in the Canadian foreign policy landscape, while strengthening systems to assess, monitor, support and communicate those strengths.

## 54 **Part 2 Mandate, Principles and Strategic Goals**

### 55 **Foundations and principles**

- 56 IDRC will support technical and social innovations that contribute to the betterment of the social, economic and environmental conditions of the poor, oppressed and the marginalized people in countries of the South.
- 57 The **IDRC Act** (1970) is the framework within which the Centre operates. The Act mandates the Centre "*...to initiate, encourage, support and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world and into the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions.....*"
- 58 In pursuit of this objective, IDRC has focussed on encouraging and supporting developing country researchers to conduct research in their own institutions. In so doing, it has helped the developing regions "*...to build up the research capabilities, the innovative skills and the institutions required to solve their problems.*" In persevering with this focus, the Centre will concentrate on building research capacity principally in terms of improving individual researchers' opportunities to undertake research and the methodologies they use to do it. When appropriate and feasible, the Centre will devolve the responsibility for program coordination, administration and management to institutions in the South.
- 59 The Act also empowers the Centre "*to enlist the talents of natural and social scientists of Canada and other countries; to encourage generally the coordination of international research; and to foster cooperation in research on development problems between the developed and developing regions for their mutual benefit.*" The Centre will pursue opportunities as appropriate to effectively implement its programming in these areas.
- 60 The **mission** of IDRC remains "Empowerment through Knowledge", i.e. to promote interaction, and foster a spirit of cooperation and mutual learning within and among social groups, nations and societies through the creation, and adaptation of the knowledge that the people of developing countries judge to be of greatest relevance to their own prosperity, security and equity.
- 61 IDRC will retain the principles of **sustainable and equitable development** and **poverty reduction** as the foundations for its programming.
- 62 Sustainable development allows humanity to progressively meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 63 Equitable development implies that economic growth benefits the poor and that inequities are progressively removed. These inequities can cut along many dimensions (gender,



ethnicity, rural/urban residence, socio-economic class, religion, caste, age), and frequently overlap and reinforce each other.

- 64 Since poverty is multi-dimensional, poverty reduction must address economic, social, political, environmental and cultural factors. The reduction of multi-dimensional poverty implies that people gain greater control over the own lives.
- 65 IDRC recognizes that the respect, protection and promotion of human rights constitute an integral part of sustainable and equitable development and poverty reduction. By progressively gaining control over their economic, social and political lives, people work toward realizing their **human rights**: civil, political, economic, social and cultural.
- 66 Pluralism, diversity and good governance are key to realizing sustainable and equitable development, poverty reduction and human rights. Sustainable and equitable development, poverty reduction and the realization of human rights all require improved access to knowledge and an increased local capability to generate, interpret and apply knowledge. The expansion of local capability to generate, interpret and apply knowledge contributes to the creation of a facilitating and enabling environment for economic growth, social progress and greater human freedom. Indeed, the relationship between development, human rights and knowledge is mutually reinforcing. Research and the dissemination of knowledge can be undertaken most effectively under conditions of intellectual liberty and unrestricted communication. In determining how and where to direct its support for research, the Centre will respond to the priorities expressed by researchers and the policy community in developing countries who share the commitment to sustainable and equitable development, poverty reduction and human rights.
- 67 Research that is blind to the various forms of social inequity such as **gender discrimination** can reinforce inequity and inequality. The relevance of knowledge generated by research and the effectiveness of its application require that political, social and economic inequity are integral parts of the analysis. Research must take into account the differential impact that change will have on the lives of women and men, on poor and non-poor, on young and old, on rural and urban or peri-urban dwellers. If it fails to do so, crucial questions of social and economic equity will be distorted or ignored. While gender analysis and social analysis are cross-cutting in research for development, research focused on gender and social inequities can also seek to eliminate inequity and inequality.
- 68 The Corporate Strategy and Program Framework is intended to provide general guidance and boundaries for the work of the Centre. Given the heterogeneity of conditions in “the South” — political, social, cultural, research, economic, technological — IDRC must rely heavily on country and region specific consultations and the **discretion and creative judgement of staff** for specific program choices.
- 69 Supporting research, especially in the context of weak infrastructure and in circumstances where the prospects for the uptake and effective use of knowledge are uncertain, is inherently a risky business. However, safe environments are rarely where the greatest needs are found. Using evidence sensitive to the contexts and perspectives of the South, IDRC will take **risks** knowingly and adapt to local settings.
- 70 IDRC must preserve the intellectual and administrative **flexibility to experiment** with new approaches to problem-oriented, multidisciplinary, participatory research. Where

appropriate IDRC will **demonstrate leadership** in the research for development community and **be forward-looking** in program choices and approaches.

- 71 As the IDRC Act makes clear, the Centre is concerned with research *for development*, i.e. the research is intended to contribute to improving the lives of people in developing countries. Therefore, as well as making the needs and aspirations of the people of the South the starting point of its work, IDRC will strive for sustainable interventions by making every effort to ensure that the results of the research that it supports influence policies, practices and technologies that bear on the lives of those same people.
- 72 Underlying all of its work, the Centre will strive for **excellence** in research and will support the efforts of others in this respect. Whether helping to build research capacity or to produce results that will inform public policy and practice, IDRC will expect the work that it supports to be methodologically sound and scientifically valid.
- 73 The knowledge and technologies that are developed with IDRC support should be readily available to all those in developing countries who can benefit from them. Wherever it is consistent with this principle, recipient institutions should own the intellectual property rights that arise in the work they produce and profit freely from it. They should always be formally acknowledged as the creators of the work.

## 74 **Strategic Goals**

- 75 IDRC will strengthen and help to mobilize the local research capacity of developing countries, especially in the Program Areas of Environment and Natural Resource Management (ENRM), Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D), and Social and Economic Policy (SEP).
- 76 IDRC will foster and support the production, dissemination and application of research results that lead to changed practices, technologies, policies and laws that promote sustainable and equitable development and poverty reduction.
- 77 IDRC will leverage additional Canadian resources for research for development, by creating, reinforcing, funding and participating in partnerships between Canadian institutions and institutions in the developing world.
- 78 In pursuing these goals, IDRC will assess performance according to four main criteria, namely the extent to which the Centre contributes to:
- building a favourable environment within which research can be carried out and which provides opportunities for individual researchers in the South;
  - supporting research that is credible, i.e. scientifically valid and methodologically sound;
  - influencing practices, technologies, policies and laws that contribute to sustainable and equitable development and poverty reduction; and
  - building explicitly Southern agendas into current international policy debates and developmental decision-making at all levels.



## 79 **Program Complements**

### 80 **Canadian partnerships**

- 81 The Centre will continue to develop and maintain a range of partnerships with Canadians based on inter-institutional cooperation, collaborative research, and extensive networking around research and access to knowledge.
- 82 As the Canadian research community grows and evolves in the context of rapid technological change, increasing internationalization and global interdependence, IDRC's approach to Canadian partnerships will be driven by the research agenda of its Southern partners. As enabled by the IDRC Act, the Centre will *"...enlist the talents of natural and social scientists of Canada..."* and will seek to improve opportunities for Southern researchers to access the knowledge and perspectives of Canadian researchers. Equally, it will strive to increase the awareness of Canadian researchers of the contribution that Canadian science can make to addressing development problems and to the benefits to Canada from such collaboration.
- 83 The Centre will also engage a wide range of actors in civil society, both those directly concerned with international development and those global citizens concerned with the generation and open dissemination of knowledge.

### 84 **Donor partnerships**

- 85 The underlying principles of IDRC's approach to working with other donors are derived in part from the IDRC Act: *"...to encourage generally the coordination of international research..."*. The Centre's partnership work will be directed towards increasing the overall flow of resources for research by Southern institutions. IDRC will work with donor partners who share IDRC's view of the importance of developing the research capacity and responding to the research agenda of the developing countries. IDRC will continue to concentrate its partnership development resources on working with a small number of "core like-minded donors", as well as with "emerging and innovative donors". CIDA has been IDRC's leading partner in the donor community and this important partnership will continue. The Centre will work with private sector organizations that share its core values and principles.

### 86 **Field presence**

- 87 IDRC believes that it should not only be perceived as being sensitive to and knowledgeable about research conditions in the South, but it should also be physically present in the developing regions of the world. IDRC will ensure that its presence in the field leads to better strategic intelligence, program development and implementation, partnerships, and use of research results, as well as representation and relations with Canadian and other field-based institutions. The Centre will continue to be open to experimentation with different forms of field presence, particularly those consistent with the devolution of program management and administration to the South.

### 88 **Communications**

- 89 IDRC recognizes that applying research to improve the lives of poor people in the South depends on cooperative relationships between researchers, communities, decision

makers and policy makers throughout the research process. IDRC will direct resources to staff and research partners to develop and use a range of targeted communications tools and strategies so that the research we support can influence policies, practices and technologies that contribute to sustainable and equitable development and poverty reduction.

- 90 IDRC will communicate to the Canadian public the central importance of international research cooperation in an increasingly interdependent global economy and will inform it of the results achieved through the Centre's efforts.

## 91 **Research Information**

- 92 IDRC is dedicated to facilitating timely access to relevant, accurate information for research purposes. The main clients are IDRC program recipients, IDRC staff, and the Canadian and international development research communities. The Centre will maintain a high level of expertise in and awareness of appropriate technologies and content in order to strengthen the research information resources of program recipients and their capacity to generate and share knowledge.

## 93 **Learning, knowledge, monitoring and evaluation**

- 94 An institution that takes risks must also learn about what works (or not) and why (or why not). IDRC recognizes that evaluation makes an essential contribution to learning and acquiring knowledge about effective approaches to research for development. The Centre will approach evaluation as a tool for both learning and accountability. IDRC will use — and help develop — the best available monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure that it remains on track with respect to its plans and budgets. It will also maintain a critical perspective on the relevance of its plans, and propose changes to them as circumstances change. The Centre will direct efforts to strengthen the evaluation capacity of recipient institutions and individuals and of IDRC staff to enhance the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of research projects, programs and processes, and internal governance and administrative procedures.
- 95 In an effort to remain a world-class knowledge-based institution, the Centre will engage in continuous learning on both program and operational issues, as well as on issues related to cross-cutting functions like audit, evaluation, planning and communications.

## 96 **Stewardship, probity and good corporate governance**

- 97 In executing its program of work, the Centre will exercise probity and proper stewardship of the public resources that have been entrusted to it. Recognising that an element of risk is inherent in all research work, the Centre will manage risk in a responsible, informed manner that balances the demands of probity and innovation. The Centre will continue to apply the best practice norms for the governance of Crown corporations. During the period 2005-2010, the Centre will implement an Operational Plan to align the Centre's resources to ensure an organizational structure, an internal governance and accountability model, and key business processes that are best suited to supporting the achievement of the goals and objectives of the CS+PF. In its internal operations as in its programs, the Centre will strive for continuous improvement.